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THE MYTHS OF REGENERATION.

WHEN we find the same legends, myths, and proverbs among the stores of various countries, we are forced to look to two causes—either that their origin can be traced to the same people or epoch, or that the phenomena producing them have been common to the several countries. Therefore, is the study of Universal Legends an interesting one, both as showing the tenacity of the human mind to traditionary intelligence, and as proving that psychological phenomena will create similar results under widely different circumstances. We may thus discover that the outer garniture of the thought may be greatly diversified, but there is still the same sap of meaning running through all its ramifications. A comparison of national proverbs shows this distinctly. If men return commodities, mental or material, where there is an over-satiety of the same, we apply the adage of their carrying coals to Newcastle. The same manifestations in other times and lands have given rise to such sayings as "Pepper to Hindostan," "Enchantments to Egypt," "Owls to Athens," and "Indulgences to Rome."

So, of legends and myths; an universal sentiment or experience of the human race gives rise to such as have a variety of thought to proclaim them kin, despite the disparity of detail; for to no other cause can we associate such as seem almost eternal and ubiquitous. If in Greece the tumultuous rumbling of a tempest is charged upon the wheels of Jove's rolling chariot, and among the Northmen, to the heavy trundling of the wain of Thor; if they had Nereids in classic myth, and Mermaids in British story; if the name affords the only difference between the Naiads of Greece, the Nixen of Germany, and the Water-Elves of Britain; or between the Paræ of the ancient legendary, and the Nornas of Scandinavian fables, we can only account for the coincidence by considering that the longings of the same humanity were only answered by like typical suppositions in each case, thus, reversely, pointing to their origin in a common nature. If we find the story of Faust, wherever Christianity is, we must think it a concomitant idea, rather than an individual incident become general; and following as naturally as the doctrine of Metempsychosis succeeds the opinion of the Immortality of the Soul.

There is sometimes a correspondence among legends that it is puzzling to account for, either by mental or historical causes, leaving it only to be charged upon our powers of assimilation; for we sometimes find a nation taking to itself the legendary wealth of another. There is a passion for myths in the human mind. It breaks out paramount now and then. We have seen in an age hardly past, such men as Schlegel, Tieck and Werner succumb to it, and,—almost avowedly,—join the Romish communion for the facilities its legendary world afford

them as poets. So we find tales of marked dramatic interest pass current from one tongue to another, assuming an outer show of the clime they rest in, and becoming so apparently indigenous in each, as to make the antiquaries of a subsequent age joyous over such a bone of contention, as the question of priority affords. Such is the case with the story of Ginevra, the beautiful bride who fatally concealed herself in a spring-lock chest on the eve of her wedding. Italy claims it for Modena, and England for various mansions. We are hardly willing to deny to the consecrated regions of Switzerland, the claim that they have to the story of Tell; yet the Danish antiquaries have discovered that he has a prototype—even to the shooting of the apple from a son's head—in their legendary chronicles. Instances of the multiplied localization of the same legend, are numerous, and Grimm has shown in his collections the marked correspondence between those of Germany and ancient Greece.

If we may believe the interpretations of antiquaries, perhaps oftentimes too imperious, almost every race preserves among its traditionary behests some recollections of a great purification of the Earth by water in a remote past. Possibly, instead of so explicit an interpretation upon data, which without a clue were inexplicable, it were in some cases allowable to attribute such a belief in a former regeneration of the Earth's inhabitants, to a sentiment which seems innate, which prompts us so often in ordinary phrase, to dwell upon the memory of "good old times." Much more certain, however, is it, that a belief in the future regeneration of the world, springs from the quality of the human organization. It is almost a concomitant of the great passion, Hope. That "there is a good time coming" is the burden of our songs. The great liminary scheme of this world is a Millennium. It matters little what are the notions about this millennium. The Socialists may fancy it a phalanstery, and the Shakers may await a universal Shakerdom, depopulating the Earth. But most men come to Romney's way of thinking, in Aurora Leigh—

"The world's old;

But the old world waits the hour to be renewed;
Toward which new hearts, in individual growth,
Must quicken, and increase to multitude
In new dynasties of the race of men;
Developed whence shall grow spontaneously
New churches, new economies, new laws
Admitting freedom, new societies
Excluding falsehood. He shall make all new."

Our hope makes the Future a magic cave of happiness, and we think it life's business to discover the *open sesame*. But we find it a shadow that runs before us, a to-morrow that is never overtaken.

"Man never is, but always to be blest."

It is not confined to individual experience. The senti-

ment widens into permeating a people's nationality. Religions become based upon it. The ancient Germans awaited the coming of the goddess Hertha, who would bring new life. The Hindoos looked to the advent of Vishnoo to check the progress of crime. The religion of Zoroaster enhances life to a Persian by the belief in a regenerating Messiah. The Jews look to a reunion of their tribe, and await the appearance of their prophet; and the book of Revelations glimpses the Millennium of the Christian Church. Similar expectations have been found among certain tribes of North American Indians, and the aboriginal races of Yucatan.

Phenomena in the natural world easily give rise to analogies, by which we reason of the psychological life. The earth teems, her productions perish, are resolved to pristine elements, and reappear in the same forms. Hence has arisen the idea of the alternation of destruction and regeneration. According to the Hindoo belief, the natural emanations of God made manifest in the flesh, are withdrawn to himself at our deaths, only to reappear. A modification of this was the belief of Greece. This alternation was typified by the Scandinavians in the myth of Balder. He is represented as the most beautiful of the gods, even as the summer sun, the source of joyousness. He is killed by a shaft of mistletoe, and wails of mourning fill Wahalla, until he is recovered, and shows his beamy face once more among them. What the absolute interpretation of this myth may be, is uncertain. It may be the loss to Heaven of the divine emanation sent to earth, and the rejoicing consequent to its return—only another form of the Hindoo scheme. Or, perhaps, if more than typifying the general alternation of light and darkness, it points to the succession of summer and winter; for at the north one succeeded the other without "the twilight of the year," and but two seasons were reckoned. So it may be but a northern rendering of the Greek story of Venus and Adonis, when the boy of the summer sun is slain by the boar, the emblem of winter; and only on condition of fulfilling the natural requirements of dividing his time between them, will the goddess of darkness restore him to the patroness of life. The same spirit is preserved in the myth of Demeter and her daughter Proserpina—Earth and its Summer—when Spring brings joy to the mother in the restoration of her child. Analogy has ever traced out in this way the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh. Among the ancient Persians, the *Parçæ* taught that when the powers of Good prevailed over Evil, the souls would regain their bodies—the spirit of life would regenerate torpid nature at the return of the summer sun. Such was the scheme worked out by the Jews; such were Mahomet's teachings; and the doctrine is prevalent throughout Christendom to-day.

This sentiment of Regeneration, beside working upon the religious life of a people, is embodied quite as gene-

rally into a belief of worldly and political reformation, which is shaped into myths and prophecies concerning the coming of some hero—usually an old monarch of the country—who is to resume sway among his people, and present a realization of the good times coming. We find such an expectation very far spread. Lono, an old King of the Hawaiians, when he died, prophesied his return with prosperity in his train. When Captain Cook visited them, they thought they had witnessed its fulfillment. The reader of old British ballads knows of the prophecy of Merlin; and the belief in the coming of King Arthur is not yet extinct in the cottages of Wales and Brittany. Tennyson shows us how it enters into the dreams of a poet.

"To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
'Arthur is come again; he cannot die!'
Then those that stood upon the hills behind,
Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair!'
And further inland voices echoed—'Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more.'"

This belief has not passed down through history without a train of consequences. When Queen Constance, of Brittany, bore a son after his father's death, the States were clamorous for his bearing the name of their traditionary hero, and affecting to hail his return in the young Prince Arthur, the chronicles tell the tale of their enthusiasm. When Arthur, Duke of Wellington, gave a proud prestige to the name of England, the poets, we may be sure, could not forget to interpret the story to their liking.

In Denmark, their old King Holgar is made the subject of a similar legend. In Switzerland, it has reference to the return of the three Tells, the founders of the Helvetic Confederation, who are presumed to be now slumbering in a cavern of the Alps, dressed in their antique garb. One of Mrs. Hemans' poems refers to it—

"The patriots three that met of yore,
Beneath the midnight sky,
And leagued their hearts on the Grutli shore,
In the name of liberty!
Now silently they sleep
Amidst the hills they freed;
But their rest is only deep
Till their country's hour of need.

"They shall wake beside their forest-sea,
In the ancient garb they wore,
When they linked the hands that make us free,
On the Grutli's moonlight shore;
And their voices shall be heard,
And be answered with a shout,
Till the echoing Alps are stirred,
And the signal fires blaze out!"

In France they had a traditionary prophecy that a

maid was to come to be their saviour, and a half-reliance upon it gave Joan of Arc much of her own presentiment, and enjoined confidence upon her countrymen.

The tradition among the Moors points to Boabdil, the last king of Granada, and the legend makes him and his court await the fitting season, bound in magic sleep in a cavern of the mountains that surround the Alhambra. Irving has given the story shape in his sketch-book of that name, in the tale of Governor Mancho and the Soldier, and the legend of the two discreet statues.

The myth in Germany is, perhaps, still more widely known. It has all the characteristics of the Moorish story; but the hero, usually an emperor, is not the same in all localities. It was essentially a Scandinavian belief, that the souls of the dead abided a resurrection in the interior of mountains, whence they would issue upon earth at intervals. Thus Wedekind is supposed to be in a mountain in Westphalia. The legend most commonly has reference to Frederic Barbarossa, who is said to sit, in his antique garb, at a stone table in a cavern, surrounded by his court and retainers, all charmed like himself. His beard is like fire, and grows through the stone; and when it shall have grown thrice its length, then he is to appear, and spread joy through the land. Many incidents are added to the story, as earnest of the good times he is to bring. He has his dwarfs about him, and sends them out to see if the ravens flutter over the hill; for as long as those birds of omen sail around, he is to know his time is not come. From the connection of the raven with the ancient divinity, Odin, it has been supposed that this myth is somehow primarily attributed to him. Among the peasantry, rare stories are told of adventurous men, who have seen the emperor in his trance—how they have received vile gifts, which proved to be gold when they got out of the cavern. Hairs have even been plucked from his beard, and these have been found to be transmuted to bands of gold; and also loaves, which they brought away.

The most famous locality in connection with this, is the Kyffhäuser, a wooded hill, topped by the remains of a tower, in Thuringia, which the traveller sees on the right of the road from Cassel to Halle. Here the story goes more particularly, that the Emperor was put under the ban by the Pope, and all churches were closed against him, and not a priest dare read him mass. Thereupon he betook himself to a cavern in the wood, to abide the fitting season when his empire shall be freed from priestcraft, and the withered tree upon which he shall hang his shield when he appears, shall propitiously burst forth into renewed life. The Emperor Otto, is, by some, made the hero of the legend of Kyffhäuser.

In a wild basin of the Haardt region, surrounded by forest hills, lies the flourishing town of Kaiserslautern, a place of great antiquity, but chiefly famous because of

the ruins—mere bits of wall—of a favorite castle of the Hohenstaufens, built here by Barbarossa, about the middle of the twelfth century. A deep cavity in the rock is here pointed out, which is believed to be the entrance to a dungeon, formerly beneath the castle, and in which the old Red Beard is supposed to be entranced as at Kyffhäuser. The tale makes it out, that contrary to the chronicles—who say he was drowned in a crusade—he fell into the hands of the Turks, from whom he escaped, and stealthily coming to his old abode, hid himself, with his knights, in the dungeon, and there awaits his time. The story here has the same accompaniment of a growing beard. There are also similar associations connected with an eminence called the Gackenberg, which rises near the little hamlet of Gemünden, some twelve miles above Frankfort on the Maine; but the Emperor's name is not given. It is Charlemagne, however, who is the denizen of the Untersberg, a considerable mountain near Salzburg, or as some say, Charles the Fifth.

This legend in Germany, as well as that of Arthur in Brittany, has not been without its historical conveyances. It was thought of in the days when the fatherland trembled at the power of Napoleon, and was made to symbolize the prostrate energies of a land which still hoped for a day of regeneration. To this end, the poet Ruckert gave it shape in song, and his verses have many a time since been sung at patriotic gatherings; while even the conservative Geibel has later tuned his lyre in the same theme. Again, in 1848, the poet, Vichoff, sung of an end to the hero's trance, and that the ravens had flown; but it was not long before he was forced to tell of their return in a new stanza, and that the old Emperor had sunk once more into his charmed sleep.

We have thus attempted to show, by citation of instances, how widely spread is the sense of some future regeneration, whether it regards the political existence of mankind, or pertains to their religious nature. W.

It is the peculiar privilege of the portrait painter to immortalize BEAUTY, to give duration to the most perishable of heaven's gifts, and bestow upon the fair "a thousand years of bloom." When the poet has done his utmost to describe the charms which kindled his fancy and inspired his song; when in the divine spirit of his art he has arrayed

"The thing he dotes upon, with coloring
Richer than roses, brighter than the beams
Of the clear sun at morning"—

when he has decked out the idol of his imagination in all the pomp of words, and similes culled from whatever is sweetest and loveliest in creation—the bloom of flowers, the freshness of the dawn, the breathings of the spring, and the sparkling of the stars—he has but given us the elements, out of which we compose a beauty, each after a fashion and fancy of our own. Painting alone can place before us the personal identity of the poet's divinity—made such by the superstition of love.

Mrs. Jameson.